THE NEW SUNDAY EXPRESS

BENGALURU • SUNDAY • DECEMBER 04, 2022 • ₹12.00 • PAGES 28 • LATE CITY EDITION

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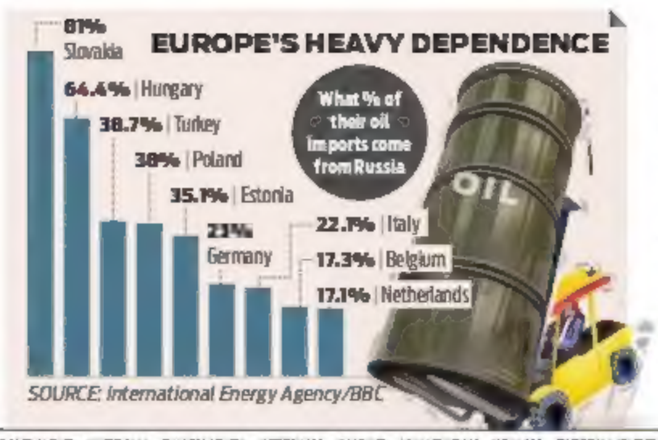

RUSSIA REJECTS OIL PRICE CAP

The $60/barrel price cap proposed by G7 and backed by the European Union is set to come into effect on Monday. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia will not accept any price ceiling on its oil. A senior Russian official said Moscow will not supply oil to countries that implement the cap | P12

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State agri dept 1st to go fully paperless

4 dists to have this facility before Dec 31, 2022; Aims to bring transparency and efficiency in process

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

FARMERS across Karnataka will be the first in India to be able to access procurement and distribution processes in a completely paperless and transparent manner, which will be mandatory from April 1, 2023. The state's agriculture department will take its first step toward that from January 1, 2023, when it will be the first agricultural department in the country to go paperless.

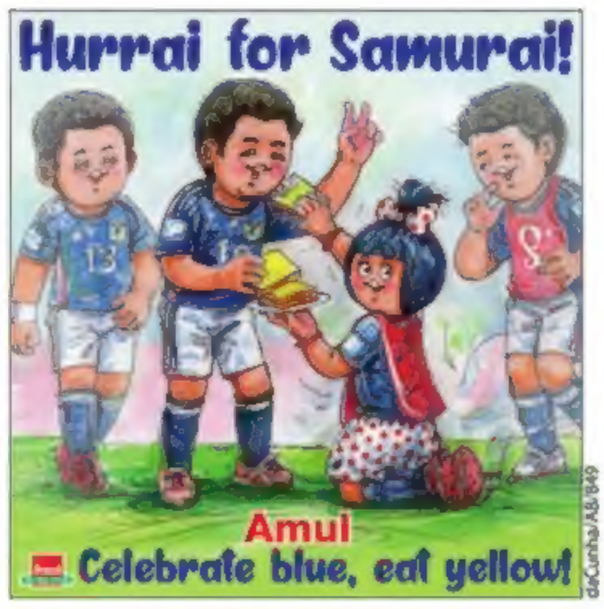
According to a government order dated November 24, 2022, before December 31, 2022, four districts of Shivamogga, Vijayapura, Chitradurga and Mysuru will have this facility, and from January 1, it will be launched in all 31 districts on a pilot basis.

"It will be mandatory from April 1, 2023 and it has to be completely paperless by then," the order said.

The entire system of digitisation is being done in association with the National Informatic Centre (NIC). With digitisation, farmers availing benefits from over 30 schemes of the state and Central governments can be checked online.

An official from the state agriculture department, on condition of anonymity, explained to The New Sunday Express: "If a farmer buys seeds or fertilisers from a particular Raitha Samparka Kendra, all these products will have QR codes. By scanning, it would be clear which farmer has purchased from which vendor and the details of the purchase and the purchaser. This basically makes the vendor responsible if seeds are of low quality. This also gives us real time data of the quantity of stock in each of the Raitha Samparka Kendras, and the live data helps us to work better. This helps the administration maintain transparency."

This is aimed at improving efficiency in the agriculture department as well as make it easy and convenient for the farmers and the vendors to maintain data, which can easily be referred to in case of possible disputes, if any. By adopting e-files, efficiency of officials will also improve. P5



Bommai announces special schemes for specially-abled

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Saturday launched a special health insurance scheme covering medical expenses up to Rs 5 lakh for treatment of People with Disabilities (PwD).

Speaking at a programme organised by the Directorate of Disabled Persons and Empowerment of Senior Citizens as part of the World Day of Persons with Disabilities 2022, the CM said 3% reservation in housing schemes for the disabled will also be provided.

A shelter for mentally-challenged children will be established soon, besides providing 2,000 battery powered tricycles to the differently-abled by March 2023 for which ₹25 crore has been earmarked, he said. "The government will ensure all facilities to people with disabilities," he said. Bommai also announced special grants for education of differently-abled in the upcoming budget. The funds for special kids in residential schools, welfare centres and even shelter homes have already been increased this year. P2

In TN, Stalin announces WFH for differently-abled

TN CM MK Stalin on Saturday said, "There is no necessity for the differently-abled persons to go to office to work. We are going to create an ambience that would facilitate working from home."

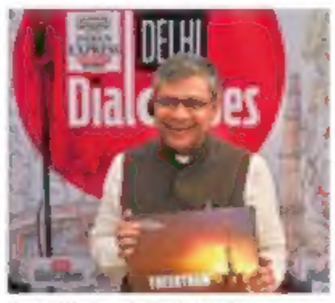
'India's telecom tech will win the world'

"WE will win the world... With these words, Ashwini Vaishnaw, the Union Minister of Communications, Electronics and Information Technology, and Railways, emphasised that the country's telecom technology sector is ready to take on the high and mighty across the globe. Vaishnaw said India will become a major exporter of telecom technology in the next 2-3 years, and that the country will break the dominance of the top global companies in the coming years.

Vaishnaw was speaking at the first edition of *TNIE* Delhi Dialogue here on Saturday. In a freewheeling conversion with the Delhi Bureau of TNIE, the minister said that India has already started getting queries from various countries, including developed nations, about the world-class 4G and 5G stack developed here in the last couple of years.

Vaishnaw was forthright in his responses and played all the difficult questions with a straight bat.

On the controversial issue of the new personal data protection (draft) bill, he dismissed concerns over the government exempting itself from most of the provisions of the law. He said most exemptions are specific, and each has a clear logic to it. "There are developed Western countries that have given many more exemptions than what we have given to ourselves," he said.



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw

Vaishnaw was dismissive of 'experts' creating panic over it, saying, "I have met people who very deeply understand privacy and privacy-related regulations, and have worked in the field in other geographies. I must have by now met 90 such experts — real experts."

Defending the draft data privacy law, Vaishnaw said it is for the first time that citizens' safety has been kept the central theme of a bill.

The discussion also veered to the draft telecom bill, which has also created its own set of controversies – the primary being the proposal to bring OTT platforms under a licence regime. However, the minister hinted that the OTT platforms will have to deal with only "light-touch regulations".

Vaishnaw wears many hats, and being the railway minister is one of them. He announced that work on the first bullet train is on in full swing. Around 112 km of the track has been built since August 2021. The first trial runs of the bullet train will be held in 2026, Vaishnaw said. The full coverage of the *TNIE* Delhi Dialogue will appear on Tuesday.

Umar Khalid freed in one Delhi riot case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

A Delhi court on Saturday discharged student activist Umar Khalid and United Against Hate member Khalid Saifi in a case related to arson, vandalism and stone pelting in the 2020 riots in north-east Delhi.

However, the former JNU students will remain in judicial custody in the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act case slapped against them over larger conspiracy behind the riots.

Additional Sessions Judge Pulastya Pramachala issued the order in the First Information Report registered at a police station on the basis of the statement of constable Sangram Singh, who said a mob had pelted stones and set several vehicles on fire.

The court also acquitted three others — Mohammed Illiyas, Jagar Khan and Tariq Moin Rizvi — charged over riots on furnishing a bond of ₹10,000 with one surety in the like amount.

EXPRESS READ

Partner dies as man pushes her under lorry in Kolar

KOLAR: A man, who was drunk, killed his live-in partner by pushing her under the rear wheel of a moving lorry near the old bus stand in Chinthamani on Saturday, following a quarrel with her. Police said the accused Munikrishna (45), a resident of Siddlaghatta, had deserted his wife and was living with the victim, Sameera Sulthana (35).

Container rams 7 vehicles on NH-48, traffic hit for 1 hr

BENGALURU: Traffic came to a complete standstill for an hour on NH-48 when a Tumakuru-bound container vehicle rammed seven other vehicles due to some glitch in brakes, and came to a halt after hitting a push-cart, leaving one injured. The incident took place near the Nelamangala toll around 4.15 pm.

Kavitha changes tack

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

A day after accepting the CBI's request for her questioning on December 6 in the Delhi excise policy scam, TRS leader K Kavitha changed tack and sought copies of a complaint and other documents the probe agency had cited in its notice.

In her letter to the CBI on Saturday, she said the date of her questioning could be fixed after she acquaints herself with the contents of the complaint. In other words, her offer to meet CBI officials at her residence in Hyderabad on December 6 is subject to the receipt of the documents.

On Saturday morning, Kavitha called on her father Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. Sources said the legal aspects of the CBI notice were examined in detail by both of them, after which the letter was sent in the evening. Kavitha's letter to Alok Kumar Shahi, DSP, CBI states: "I would request you to kindly provide me copies of the complaint vide OM No.14035/06/2022-Delhi-1 dated 22/07/22 received from Sri Praveen Kumar Roy, MHA of India, and RC 53(A)/2022 of CBI/ACB/Delhi referred to in your notice... Date of our meeting can be fixed at Hyderabad after the receipt of the documents."

DUTCH OF CLASS AGAINST U.S.

Netherlands became the first team to advance to the last eight of the World Cup. A look at the match...

Denzel Dumfries celebrates his goal against USA with teammates in Doha on Saturday | AP

CLINICAL FINISH

The pattern of the match progressed on expected lines with US showing plenty of energy but they left big gaps behind that the Netherlands exploited. Before half-time they raced into a two-goal lead with both first half shots on target resulting in goals. US got one back but Netherlands were always in command

RED AFTER GOAL HIGH!

Vincent Aboubakar headed in a stoppage-time winner and was then sent off as Cameroon claimed a memorable 1-0 win over Brazil on Friday. Aboubakar broke the deadlock in the 92nd minute. He was booked for removing his shirt in the wild celebrations that followed and, having already been cautioned, had to leave | P15

FIGHTING CONTEST

In a feisty contest that saw tempers flare, Switzerland became the final team to book last 16 berth with 3-2 a win over Serbia. The close game witnessed as many as 11 yellow cards — most in a World Cup game since the 2010 final. The Swiss team will face Portugal next

TODAY'S MATCHES (RD OF 16): France vs Poland | 8:30 PM, England vs Senegal | 12:30 AM

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CONGRESS

UNITED, SAYS KPCC CHIEF DK SHIVAKUMAR

In an informal interaction with *TNSE*, Shivakumar spoke on topics ranging from internal rift in the party to strategy for the polls to cases registered against him | P4

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